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ABSTRACT

To prepare prospective elementary teachers for inner-city schools, this program was initiated at the University of Minnesota. Background knowledge concerning the family, the child, and the community gives the student teachers an understanding of the sources of problems encountered in inner-city classrooms. Resource people from the community and public schools bring expertise in urban sociology; poverty; the culture of black, Indian, and Mexican Americans; communication and how it is affected by cultural differences; classroom techniques relevant to the inner-city classroom--creative drama, role-playing and the use of multi-ethnic materials. Special attention is given to the techniques of teaching the basic skills and classroom management. Integral parts of the program are: (1) the careful screening of student candidates and cooperating teacher, (2) the joint school-university appointment of inner-city classroom teachers to coordinate the program and supervise the students, and (3) the development of an advisory committee, made up of representatives from both institutions, to assist in planning, evaluating, and recommending improvements in the program. Among the values have been that the number of students per quarter has increased from an average of 17 in 1964 to an average of 60 in 1969, that approximately two thirds of the student participants have chosen to remain as inner-city teachers, and that 11 groups involved have offered positive and supportive cooperation. (Author/JES)

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URBAN AREA ELEMENTARY STUDENT TEACHING PROGRAM

University of Minnesota

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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URBAN AREA ELEMENTARY STUDENT TEACHING PROGRAM - UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

In the spring of 1964 an elementary student teaching program in disadvantaged area schools was initiated at the University of Minnesota. Up to this time, student teachers were randomly placed in low-, middle-, or high-income area schools. It was evident that those placed in the disadvantaged areas needed special assistance and guidance to understand the educational problems peculiar to these schools. In cooperation with Dr. Gordon Mork, then Director of Student Teaching, Mrs. Jean Hosterman, a University Elementary Supervisor of Student Teachers, set up a trial plan for student teachers placed in inner-city schools for the 1964-65 school year. This plan, on the basis of favorable response from the students and the public schools, was extended for the 1965-66 school year.

Administrative changes to implement the trial plan were simple and few. All student teachers assigned to low-income schools were placed under the supervision of the same University supervisor. The student teachers for the special assignments were carefully selected for their potential to succeed in a difficult and challenging classroom situation. The criteria for selection of students were satisfactory academic records; successful work experience with groups of children in the youth activities community program in their junior year; well-adjusted, mature individuals as indicated by personal autobiographies and records; and most important of all, exceptional teaching ability and flexibility during their first quarter of student teaching. The potential candidates who were recommended by the first-quarter University supervisors were given the option of taking their second student teaching experience in an inner-city school or remaining in a middle- or upper-income area. Many, after hearing of the supportive program, chose to do their second quarter student teaching in a low-income area school.

Through cooperative planning of the members of the University Student Teaching

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and the Minneapolis Personnel Departments, eight "target" area schools were selected for the special program. Cooperating teachers were carefully screened by the building principals.

Orientation meetings for the students were held prior to school assignments for the purpose of helping students understand the schools, families and neighborhood communities where they would be teaching and to alleviate some of the expressed fears about their assignments. Activities and topics of these early orientation meetings were varied:

1. a general explanation of the student teaching program in low income areas, with emphasis on the aims and opportunities of the program and with time allowed for questions and discussions
2. a discussion with a sociologist about the effects of poverty on family life
3. a discussion with a psychologist about the attitudes and learning difficulties of deprived children
4. field trips to the areas where the students were assigned
5. a visit to one of the schools with the principal as host and discussion leader
6. a visit to a neighborhood house with the director as the host
7. talks with personnel from the Minneapolis School Federal Projects Department about the various experimental projects in progress to help classroom teachers meet the needs of disadvantaged youngsters

Seminars were held to offer students an opportunity to get acquainted with each other, to share common classroom problems, and to discuss topics of mutual interest. The seminars varied widely in scope, from an almost instructional session with a resource person as guest speaker, to sessions akin to group therapy where the students struggled together to understand their own feelings and reactions to the children and events in the classroom. A strong group feeling developed that offered encouragement and support for the members and often practical suggestions for dealing with specific problems were presented. The group feeling of mutual support was probably one of the

greatest strengths of the program. Evaluation of the initial phase revealed that there was a need for the group to spend more time than the nine seminar hours to discuss, to build background of understanding and to learn more about inner-city youngsters.

In the spring of 1966 Miss Lois Thies assumed the responsibility as the co-ordinator of the program. The name was changed to the Urban Areas Student Teaching Program. Additional financial support was obtained from the Upper Midwest Regional Educational Laboratory which provided the funds for certain resources; such as video-taping and library materials, and for the training of cooperating teachers. The primary direction was now to expand and refine the existing program on the basis of Mrs. Hosterman's recommendations:

1. that the special program for student teaching in deprived areas be made a permanent part of the Student Teaching Department, and that it be expanded to include the St. Paul area;

2. that the University Supervisor(s) assigned to the group be available for at least two continuous years to work in the program;

3. that the program be given publicity to students in their junior year of training and during their first quarter of student teaching, so that those who are interested will request the placement;

4. that a special course be provided to run concurrently with or prior to the student teaching quarter to acquaint students thoroughly with the communities and culture of the children in their classrooms;

5. that a systematic effort be made with all University Supervisors to identify first quarter student teachers who would be good candidates for their second quarter of experience in the inner-city schools;

6. that the placement of but one student teacher in one school be avoided.

All of the recommendations have been carried out. A special course, "Teaching in the Inner-City", offered concurrently with the student teaching experience was added to the regular weekly seminar. Resource people from the community, the University and public schools provided information on urban sociology; the culture of Black-. Indian-, and Mexican-Americans; communication and how it is affected by cultural dif-

ferences; problems facing school boards and classroom techniques relevant to the inner-city school, such as creative drama, role-playing and the use of multi-ethnic materials. Voluntary participation of students and a successful first quarter's teaching experience continued as selective criteria. Exceptions were made for some first quarter students who were carefully screened before acceptance to the program. Recruiting of competent teachers to serve as cooperating teachers was made easier as the teachers became aware of the supportive resources and the special selection of strong student teachers. Workshops and orientation meetings were held for the cooperating teachers.

Expansion in other directions occurred. To assure open communication and co-operative effort between the University and the school systems an elementary advisory committee made up of inner-city classroom teachers, principals, administrative personnel, the director of student teaching and two coordinators of student teaching met to plan activities and to discuss ways to improve the inner-city student teaching experience. The committee grew in membership to include two elementary teaching methods professors, the joint appointment people and representatives from the regular student teaching program. Sub-committees were formed to frame recommendations which were presented to the College of Education, the Department of Clinical Experiences and the public schools. Many of these recommendations have been carried out. Others are in the process of being implemented. The committee members continue today taking active leadership roles for on-going evaluation and improvement of the program.

In addition to supervising the student-teachers placed in inner-city schools, the Urban Area Student Teaching coordinator made arrangements for first-quarter and all-day student teachers to spend one morning in an inner-city school. The principals have been highly cooperative in planning for these visits which generally include an overview of the nearby community and the school population, a tour of the building

and an observation in a classroom.

In the winter quarter of 1968 a Minneapolis classroom teacher with several years of successful inner-city teaching was placed on an experimental joint appointment with the University of Minnesota Urban Areas Student Teaching program to supervise the student teachers placed in inner-city assignments. Her salary was paid by the two institutions. The success of this joint appointment led to the shared responsibility being extended to include one more person from Minneapolis and two from St. Paul. All have been given coordinator positions. Their responsibilities include sharing their experience and knowledge of the inner-city schools, families and communities with their students; meeting with and recruiting competent teachers to take students; keeping communication channels open with the principals, administrative personnel; working with the personnel directors to secure appropriate placements for the students wanting to teach in inner-city schools and following up in informal settings the first and second year teachers who were Urban Area student teachers.

The joint appointment coordinators are also actively cooperating with the College of Education in setting-up junior experiences; serving as resource people to University education and liberal arts classes, and to other state college classes and arranging opportunities for pre-tenure teachers (former Urban Area students) and present students to talk together.

The number of students per quarter has increased from an average of seventeen in 1964 to an average of sixty in 1969. Approximately two-thirds of the students volunteering to participate in the Program choose to remain as teachers in the inner-city schools. Many are in the same buildings where they have student taught. Several have gone into inner-city schools in other school systems. Reports from the principals and other school personnel indicate that the Urban Area teachers have added a new zest to their teaching staffs. The use of joint appointment coordinators; cluster-

ing of students in buildings for added group feeling; the open acceptance of our students by the cooperating teachers; the cooperation of the other University coordinators in identifying potential candidates; the leadership of the members of the Advisory Committee; the resource people from the University, public schools and the community; the positive support of the school systems; the financial support of the College of Education and the public schools; the recruitment of the students as classroom teachers in the inner-city; the open communication channels--all point to a higher education, public schools, community cooperative relationship that has had a salutary effect on the children in the inner-city schools of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

New ideas, exchange of information, open communication make this an ever-changing, flexible, viable Program.

Recommendations to

Clinical Experiences

The Urban Area Student Teaching Advisory Committee was organized in 1966 through the Department of Clinical Experiences to improve and expand the Student Teaching Program for Inner-City Schools. The public school representatives have expressed that new directions in the total preparation of teachers be explored.

Through the cooperative efforts of these representatives (membership list attached) the following recommendations were drawn up for submission to proper channels for action:

We recommend that:

1. Criteria for the selection of classroom supervising teachers should be:
   a. positive relationship with pupils
   b. positive relationship with own staff, e.g. willing to share ideas
   c. flexibility
   d. reasonable (not rigid) control
   e. knowledge of sequential skill development and teaching techniques
   f. ability to plan and execute short- and long-range educational program to meet needs of pupils
   g. positive attitude toward the need to build understanding between the community and the school

2. Teachers in their second and third year of probation should be considered as student teaching supervisors. Teachers who are in their first year in a school system should not be considered unless having had a successfully previous teaching experience in another system.

3. A minimum number of three-half days should be used for in-service workshops for all supervising teachers. (Substitute service should be provided.)

4. A follow-up intern program (under the cooperative planning of public schools and the University) be set up for all first-year teachers who have participated in the University inner-city student teaching program.

5. The number of joint appointments should be increased for each school system. University supervising teachers assigned to this program should have successfully worked in inner-city schools a minimum of three years. The number of joint appointments and selection of teachers for these appointments should be determined through the cooperative efforts of the public schools and the University Urban Areas Student Teaching Department.

6. Joint appointment supervisor to work in conjunction with helping teachers in assisting first year teachers in inner-city schools.

7. There is a need to explore aspects of the student teaching assignment in the inner-city. Most inner-city schools are on a lunch program which leaves little time for student-teacher communications.

8. A student teacher and a junior practicum student should be placed on an experimental basis, with a master teacher for one quarter. This will permit a master teacher to use his experience to wider advantage.

9. Several inner-city classrooms should be identified on the basis of excellence in inner-city teaching and designated for observation by appointment by elementary education students and for class observation by University methods classes. Some classrooms should be equipped with observation booths.

Recommendations to

College of Education

The Urban Area Student Teaching Advisory Committee was organized in 1966 through the Department of Clinical Experiences to improve and expand the Student Teaching Program for Inner-City Schools. The public school representatives have expressed that new directions in the total preparation of teachers be explored.

Through the cooperative efforts of these representatives (membership list attached) the following recommendations were drawn up for submission to proper channels for action:

We recommend that:

1. All elementary education majors be required to take courses in social sciences that will give background in urban area problems and minority contributions. Further contact should immediately be made with the social sciences departments for recommendation of courses.

2. A committee be established in the elementary education department to explore and implement human relations training in the preparation program of elementary teachers. Within the present program, no training is available in this crucial area.

3. A committee be established to investigate the possibility of a sequence of course work for teaching the educationally disadvantaged.

4. An inner-city school be used as a laboratory school.

5. Elementary education majors be given an opportunity to become involved in inner-city classes in observation-participation experiences early in their program. This could include involvement in Ed. 75A, summer experience as a paid or unpaid teacher aide, etc.

6. Opportunities be made for elementary education faculty members to acquaint themselves with the inner-city. As a result of this exposure, methods courses could include content to develop understanding of the educationally disadvantaged child in the teaching of science, reading, language arts, etc.

7. The possibility of involving teachers in the inner-city classroom as a teacher associate for method courses be explored. This joint relationship could also provide leadership for in-service programs.

8. There is need to explore aspects of the student teaching assignment in the inner-city. Most inner-city schools are on a lunch program which leaves little time for student-teacher communications.

Recommendations to

Minneapolis and St. Paul Public Schools

The Urban Area Student Teaching Advisory Committee was organized in 1966 through the Department of Clinical Experiences to improve and expand the Student Teaching Program for Inner-City Schools. The public school representatives have expressed that new directions in the total preparation of teachers be explored.

Through the cooperative efforts of these representatives (membership list attached) the following recommendations were drawn up for submission to proper channels for action:

We recommend that:

1. Criteria for the selection of supervising teachers should be:
   a. positive relationship with pupils
   b. positive relationship with own staff, e.g., willing to share ideas
   c. flexibility
   d. reasonable (not rigid) control
   e. knowledge of sequential skill development and teaching techniques
   f. ability to plan and execute short- and long-range educational program to meet needs of pupils
   g. positive attitude toward the need to build understanding between the community and the school

2. Teachers in their second and third year of probation should be considered as student teaching supervisors. Teachers who are in their first year in a school system should not be considered.

3. Careful selection of second and third year probationary and tenure teachers should be made by the principals, the personnel department, elementary and secondary directors and others who are aware of the competency of teachers.

4. A minimum number of three half-days should be used for in-service workshops for all supervising teachers. (Substitute service should be provided.)

5. A follow-up intern program (under the cooperative planning of public schools and the University) be set up for all first-year teachers who have participated in the University inner-city student teaching program.

6. The in-service orientation meetings held should relate more closely to the individual needs of the teachers. (Urban Areas student teachers who have participated in Ed.T. 55, "Teaching in the Inner-City", should have an experience different from those who are new to the inner-city.)

7. The number of joint appointments should be increased for each school system. University supervising teachers assigned to this program should have successfully worked in inner-city schools a minimum of three years. The number of joint appointments and selection of teachers for these appointments should be determined through the cooperative efforts of the public schools and the University Clinical Experiences Department.

8. Joint appointment supervisor to work in conjunction with helping teachers in assisting first year teachers in inner-city schools.

9. Helping teachers assigned to these teachers should have demonstrated ability to work with the problems faced by inner-city teachers.

10. There is need to explore aspects of the student teaching assignment in the inner-city. Most inner-city schools are on a lunch program which leaves little time for teacher-student communication.

11. A student teacher and a junior practicum student should be placed on an experimental basis, with a master teacher for one quarter. This will permit a master teacher to use his experience to wider advantage.

12. Several inner-city classrooms should be identified on a basis of excellence in inner-city teaching and designated for open observation by elementary education students and for class observation by University methods' classes. Some classrooms should be equipped with observation booths.